THE ORGANIC UNION

of the

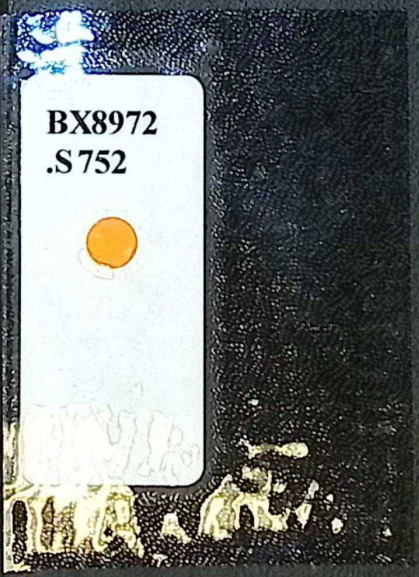
Cumberland Presbyterian Church

with the

Presbyterian Church in the

United States of America

JOHN VANT STEPHENS



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Compiled and Arranged

BY

JOHN VANT STEPHENS

A Member of The Lebanon Seminary Faculty, 1894–1910, A Member of The Lane Seminary Faculty, 1910–1932. Author of The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, The Causes Leading to the Organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, The Cumberland Presbyterian Digest, Elect Infants or Infant Salvation in the Westminster Symbols, The Presbyterian Churches—Unions and Divisions, Presbyterian Government, The New Lights, Etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was completed on May 24, 1906, over thirty-seven years ago. No historical statement of this Union has ever been written. It is not strange, therefore, that in the minds of many, of a later generation, there is a vagueness about the Union itself, as well as the process of its achievement. The number and nature of inquiries concerning this Union, and the course taken in its accomplishment, emphasize the urgent need of an accurate statement of the facts in effecting it. In view of such a need this sketch, based on official records, is issued.

In order to secure the greatest accuracy, the manuscript of this narrative was submitted to the Rev. Dr. James E. Clarke for verification, for which no one is more competent. Dr. Clarke was the editor of *The Cumberland Presbyterian,* 1904–10 and its successor, *The Presbyterian Advance,* 1910–34, covering the time of the union proceedings and the litigation following. As editor of these official publications, he was familiar with various details of the Union and the litigation. Writ-

from Located

ing to the Compiler, he says: "Your purpose is fine. It will be a generous service to future historians. I feel sure the facts you state are correct."

On both sides of the Atlantic there is now a pronounced feeling that some church groups should draw into closer fellowship and cooperation, if not into organic unions. The divisions of Protestantism, many of them petty, have been one of its greatest weaknesses. The situation is growing worse rather than better, materially retarding the progress of world evangelization. This subject may well engage the earnest, prayerful consideration of Christian leaders in particular, and the masses of Christians in general. It is hoped that this brief story, in some measure, may contribute to an amelioration of this unfortunate condition.

JOHN VANT STEPHENS.

The Lane Seminary Building,
Cincinnati, Ohio,
November 8, 1943.

Section I

THE ORGANIC UNION

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church came into being in 1810, to meet and remedy, as far as possible, deplorable conditions existing on the frontier. Its concern was to take the gospel, which was believed to be "the power of God unto salvation," to the scattered settlements. It was not the purpose to originate a new Church, but circumstances, over which it had no control, ordered otherwise. Its founders were guided by two controlling principles: one, that of an adaptation of the standard of ministerial education to the imperative needs on the frontier, raising the standard as rapidly as the cultural advancement would permit; the other, that of a modification of hyper-Calvinism.*

In May, 1903, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America completed the revision of its Confession of Faith, which opened the way for an organic union with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Revision of Creeds have been effected in three

* See Stephens' "The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church," pp. 54-64, 103-132.

ways: (1) By substitution, or change in the text. (2) By additions to the text. (3) By a legal, authoritative interpretation of the text. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1814 adopted the first named method. The United Presbyterian and Free Churches of Scotland followed the third-named method; while the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America followed both the second and third methods.

On May 21, 1903, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met at Los Angeles, California, and on the same day The General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church convened at Nashville, Tennessee. At these meetings each General Assembly appointed a Committee on Fraternity and Union. In due time these two Committees met and prepared a tentative Basis of Union which was submitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, meeting at Buffalo, New York, on May 19, 1904, and to the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, convening on the same day, at Dallas, Texas.

THE BASIS OF UNION

The Basis of Union provided that "the Union shall be effected on the doctrinal basis of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian

Church in the United States of America, as revised in 1903, and of its other doctrinal and ecclesiastical standards; and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged as the inspired word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Constitutional Rule Number One provided that "in adopting the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as revised in 1903, as a Basis of Union, it is mutually recognized that such agreement now exists between the systems of doctrine contained in the Confessions of Faith of the two Churches as to warrant this union —a union honoring alike to both. Mutual acknowledgment also is made of the teaching and defense of essential evangelical doctrine held in common by these Churches, and of the divine favor and blessing that have made this common faith and service effectual."

Each General Assembly submitted the Basis of Union to its Presbyteries, directing them to express their approval or disapproval of the same. On May 18, 1905, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana, and the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, meeting on the same day, at Fresno, California, received reports from their Presbyteries, indicating that the Presbyteries in both Churches

had approved the Basis of Union, and a declaration to that effect was officially made by each General Assembly.

OFFICIAL DECLARATION

The official declaration made by the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reads as follows: "This General Assembly does hereby find and declare that a constitutional majority of the Presbyteries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church have voted approval of the Reunion and Union of said Churches upon the Basis set forth in said joint report, and does find and declare that said Reunion and Union has been constitutionally agreed to by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and that the said Basis of Union has, for the purpose of the Union, been constitutionally adopted."

It was not until after the Presbyteries in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had approved the Basis of Union, and the General Assembly had made official declaration of the fact, that a note of discord was sounded as to the constitutionality of the proceedings. It was a late day, two years having passed, to raise such a question. However, in the interest of unanimity, the General Assembly thought it wise to enlarge the Committee on Fraternity and Union and to postpone final action on the Union for another year. Ac-

cordingly the Committee was enlarged by the addition of nine members, most of whom had been opposed to the Union. A year later *the enlarged Committee submitted a unanimous report to the General Assembly,* in which it was stated that "probably the most valuable contribution to the work of the Committee were legal opinions, on the merits of the questions involved, from distinguished lawyers in various parts of the Nation [eight States being represented]. These honorable gentlemen were of various Church affiliations—Baptist, Methodist, Christian [Disciples of Christ], and Presbyterian, and some who are not allied with any Churches. . . . Some of these opinions were exhaustively and painstakingly written."

On May 17, 1906, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met at Des Moines, Iowa, and on the same day the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church convened at Decatur, Illinois. When the commissioners to the Assembly arrived in Decatur, they learned that a bill had been filed in the Circuit Court at Decatur, seeking to prevent the General Assembly from taking the final step to complete the Union. The late Judge John M. Gaut, representing the Assembly, filed a demurrer to the bill. Ample time was taken by the Court to hear the case.

THE COURT'S DECISION

Judge W. C. Johns, in whose Court the bill was filed, in his opinion, says: "The purpose and prayer of the bill is to enjoin them [the commissioners] individually and collectively, from taking the final step to merge, or unite, or consolidate the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." Judge Johns continues: *"In its scope, aims and contentions, the case presented to the Court has no parallel in the jurisprudence of the United States."* (Compiler's italics.)

On the question of the constitutionality of the union proceedings the Court says: "At Dallas, in 1904, the report of the Committee was adopted by slightly more than two-thirds of the votes cast; and, so far as the record has been examined, there was no controversy as to the power of the General Assembly to deal with the question of Reunion, nor as to its power to submit the question to the vote of the Presbyteries. But whether there was dissent or not, *it is certain that the question was submitted to a vote of the Presbyteries. No one of them objected to the right, power, or authority of the General Assembly, either to submit the question in the manner and time it was submitted, or to the constitutional authority to effect the reunion, if the majority of the Presbyteries should consent by their*

vote. [Compiler's italics.] At Fresno, in 1905, the vote was canvassed. It was declared that the Reunion and Union had been constitutionally agreed to by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and that the Basis of Union had, for the purpose of Union, been constitutionally adopted, and the General Assembly took measures to perfect the details of the Reunion, which had been determined by the Presbyteries. *This record discloses no question as to, nor dissent from the constitutional power, or right, of the General Assembly to do any and every thing it did in the course of two years of time. It was not until the whole matter of Reunion had been declared accomplished that a note of discord was sounded. These actions of the General Assembly must be held to be a determination of its right and power to act as it had done, and to proceed as it proposed, and ought in equity to be held as such an acquiescence by the entire denomination as to estop part of it from making a contest now. . . . In conclusion, it is also considered that this application for injunction is without precedent. No court, so far as the decisions at hand reveal, has ever enjoined a Committee of an ecclesiastical association from reporting to the main body, nor the main body from considering as to what action it should take upon any given proposition. The demurrer to the bill is sustained,*

the motion for preliminary injunction is overruled." [Compiler's italics.]

JOINT REPORT ON REUNION AND UNION ADOPTED

The General Assembly, now free from the threatened injunction, accepted the report of the Committee on Fraternity and Union and adopted the Joint Report on Reunion and Union. The General Assembly then proceeded with the transaction of other business. In view of the situation which had been developed by the leaders of the opposition to the Union, in their attempt to secure an injunction to prevent the Assembly from taking final action on the Union, the Assembly appointed a Committee, composed of one representative from each of the seventeen Synods of the Church, the Moderator and the Stated Clerk, to draft a PASTORAL LETTER* to be read in the churches. Later, the Committee presented a unanimous report, which was adopted, covering in detail the whole movement throughout the three years, the time during which the Union had been under consideration. The Pastoral Letter is a notable historic document. It should be carefully read and preserved, not for controversial but for historic reasons, clearing up as it does the vague rumors and misunderstand-

* See Section II.

ings that had been circulated in opposition to the Union.

SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT

After completing the business on the docket, the "General Assembly adjourned *sine die,* as a separate Assembly, to meet in and as a part of the One Hundred and Nineteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, on the third Thursday of May, 1907, at eleven o'clock A.M., at the place chosen by the One Hundred and Eighteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, of 1906."

Thus it will be seen that according to the law of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, as interpreted and applied by its General Assembly, *the historical continuity* (the legal entity) of its General Assembly was merged into and became a part of the legal entity of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. On *its historical continuity,* the General Assembly resolved that in its adjournment as a separate Assembly, "the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not destroy or interrupt *its historical continuity,* but will continue its life, its history and its work in the Reunited Church, under the name of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

A NEW ASSEMBLY IS BORN

After this *sine die* adjournment of the General Assembly, a group of brethren who had been commissioners to this Assembly, and serving in it until its adjournment, retired, *after its adjournment,* to a designated building, in which they had held caucuses in opposition to the Union, and organized a General Assembly of their own, *and claimed that it was the lineal successor of the General Assembly organized by the founders of the Church,* which an hour or two earlier had adjourned, *sine die,* "as a separate Assembly, to meet in and as a part" of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1907. It was evident that the leaders in the organization of this new Assembly proposed to test the legality of the Union in State and Federal Courts, notwithstanding their decisive defeat in the Circuit Court at Decatur. And this they proceeded to do.

LITIGATION

Suits were brought in fifteen States. In three of these States, the lower Courts sustained the Union, no appeals being taken. In ten of the remaining States in which appeals were taken, the Union was upheld in the first cases heard. The Missouri Supreme Court, in the first case before it, rendered an adverse opinion, but later reversed itself, affirming

the legality of the Union. The Supreme Court of Tennessee in the first case before it, April 3, 1909, and a subsequent case, held the Union to be illegal. When the final returns were all in from the Courts in the fifteen States, the record indicated that the Union was held to be legal in fourteen States, the Supreme Court in Tennessee alone holding it to be illegal.

THE U. S. SUPREME COURT

Thirty years before the Union was proposed, the Supreme Court of the United States laid down the law for the process of affecting such unions. After referring to the Presbyterian "system of ecclesiastical government," the Court expressed the opinion that "in this class of cases, we think the rule of action which should govern the Civil Courts, founded in a broad and sound view of the relations of Church and State under our system of laws, and supported by a preponderating weight of judicial authority, is that *whenever the questions of discipline or of faith or ecclesiastical rule, custom or law, have been decided by the highest of these church judicatories to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them in their application to the case before them.*" (Compiler's italics.) The Court decisions in the

fourteen States, holding the Union as legal, were in harmony with the law as laid down by this high tribunal. The General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church throughout the entire union proceedings was guided by this principle announced by the Supreme Court of the United States.

THE LAST CASE

About fourteen years after the deliverance of the first opinion by the Supreme Court of Tennessee, an opinion was rendered in the last case (Rudolph v. Foust), that came before this Court, which in the meantime, of course, had changed in its personnel. In this decision, handed down in January, 1923, the Court said: "We are asked to reconsider and overrule the former decisions of this Court in the cases of Landrith v. Hudgins and Bonham v. Harris. *While fully aware that these decisions stand alone upon the question of the validity of the Union of these two great branches of the Presbyterian Church* [Compiler's italics], and clearly cognizant of the rule of conclusiveness maintained by the Courts of other jurisdictions, and so forcibly presented in the argument and brief of counsel, nevertheless we are mindful that these appeals involve property rights adjudicated by the principle announced in the decisions referred to. *Without commitment to the prin-*

ciple of these decisions as affecting future questions of denominational unity or union [Compiler's italics], but because of the fixation of rights of property made thereunder and the length of time in which the respective parties have abided thereby, we must hold that, in litigation between these particular church organizations [Rudolph v. Foust], the decisions heretofore announced are conclusive and final. Any other course could but have the effect of disturbing adjustments long since made, and the agitation anew of factional controversies now fortunately ended." The Court held that "the decisions [Landrith v. Hudgins and Bonham v. Harris] heretofore announced are conclusive and final," and gave convincing reasons for so holding, to wit: "the fixation of rights of property made thereunder and the length of time [about fourteen years] in which the respective parties have abided thereby," and that "any other course could but have the effect of disturbing adjustments long since made, and the agitation anew of factional controversies now fortunately ended."

Had this been a *de novo* case, what opinion would the Court have rendered? Do any of the statements made by the Court shed any light on this question? The Court affirms that it is "fully aware that these decisions [Landrith v. Hudgins and Bonham v. Harris],

stand alone upon the questions of the validity of the Union of these two great branches of the Presbyterian Church"; the Court states that it was "clearly cognizant of the rule of conclusiveness maintained by the Courts of other jurisdictions" (fourteen out of fifteen States, and also Federal Courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States); finally, the Court rendered its opinion "without commitment to the principle of these decisions as affecting future questions of denominational unity or union." The Court intimates that if a case of church union were to come before it *de novo,* it would not feel bound by the decisions it was then asked to reconsider and overrule.

Besides the fifteen States in which there was litigation, a number of suits were filed in the Federal Courts. In Tennessee the well-equipped Publishing House and several local church properties were turned back to the Reunited Church by these Courts. The Union was sustained by every Federal Court before which it came, and, as indicated, the Supreme Court of the United States held the Union to be legal.

THE NEW-BORN ASSEMBLY

But what about the General Assembly originated at Decatur, Illinois, in the afternoon of May 24, 1906, by those opposed to the

Union? Unless the law of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, as interpreted and applied by its General Assembly, is repudiated, this Assembly is not, as claimed, the lineal successor of the General Assembly organized by the founders of the Church; nor, indeed, does it sustain *any legal relation to it.* Unless the Court decisions in fourteen States are repudiated, this Assembly is not, as claimed, the lineal successor of the General Assembly organized by the founders of the Church; nor, indeed, does it sustain *any legal relation* to it. Unless the ruling of all the Federal Courts, in which cases were heard, including the Supreme Court of the United States, in which several of the rulings of the Supreme Court of Tennessee were set aside, are repudiated, this Assembly is not, as claimed, the lineal successor of the General Assembly organized by the founders of the Church; nor, indeed, does it sustain *any legal relation* to it. However, the Cumberland Presbyterians who acknowledged allegiance to this late Assembly, *even though it is not the lineal successor of the General Assembly organized by the founders of the Church,* are entitled to share alike with the Cumberland Presbyterians who entered the Union, in the spiritual heritage of the frontier Church and in its subsequent notable achievements.

Section II

THE PASTORAL LETTER

To the Ministers, Officers, and Unofficial Members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church:

DEAR BRETHREN:—Your General Assembly, now in session at Decatur, Ill., deems it proper to address to you this Pastoral Letter:

When this Assembly shall have adjourned, the Union between the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America will be practically complete. Three years have been taken for the consummation of this Union. During this time, every feature of this Union has been most critically and exhaustively considered and discussed.

Our Committee, which, in connection with the Presbyterian Committee, prepared and recommended the Union agreement, was composed of men from every section of the Church, chosen by the commissioners in the General Assembly of 1903, representing those sections severally. For intellectual ability, knowledge of religious doctrines, and devotion to the interests of our Church, no more

competent Committee could have been chosen. This Committee unanimously decided that since the revision of the Presbyterian Confession there is no substantial difference between the creeds of the two Churches and that the proposed terms of union were alike honorable to both. The Presbyterian Committee concurred in this decision. The two Committees joined in a report submitting the agreement to their respective General Assemblies.

DELIBERATE CONSIDERATION

Our General Assembly, after most deliberate consideration and argument, adopted this report by a vote of one hundred and sixty-two to seventy-four, more than the constitutional majority. It was then submitted to our Presbyteries for their consideration and action. For one entire year every provision of this important agreement was discussed by those in favor of it and those opposed to it, through *The Cumberland Presbyterian,* through a periodical originated and conducted by the opponents of union themselves, through circular literature, and in our Presbyteries and Synods. A freer and fuller discussion of any question is impossible. A majority of our Presbyteries voted in favor of the union agreement. Their action was reported to our General Assembly in 1905, and that Assembly decided that the

Union had been constitutionally agreed to. Your General Assembly, now sitting, has, with the Presbyterian General Assembly, now in session, arranged the details of the Union so that it will be put into practical operation as soon as this General Assembly shall have adjourned.

JUDGE JOHNS' DECISION

This Reunion and Union of the two Churches has not only been vigorously opposed by a considerable number of our ministers and laymen in the various Church courts, but has also been contested in the Court of the State of Illinois, at Decatur, through a bill filed in that Court for an injunction to restrain the Assembly from proceeding to complete the Union in accordance with the provisions of the agreement adopted in 1905. After a most exhaustive argument by counsel on both sides of the question, Judge W. C. Johns refused the injunction asked for, and dismissed the bill, on demurrer, and thereby, in specific terms, affirmed the constitutionality and regularity of the action of the Assembly and the Presbyteries in reference to the proposed Union and Reunion.

In spite of the fact that our highest Church Court and the Civil Court have affirmed the regularity and legality of the procedure for the consummation of this Union, some of our

brethren declare their unwillingness to acquiesce in the consummation of the Union, and are striving to induce other brethren to join with them in repudiating the action of our General Assembly and the Presbyteries. [Compiler's italics.]

THE FACTS IN THE CASE

It therefore seems proper for us to address you this Pastoral Letter, setting forth briefly the facts in the case and explaining certain matters in controversy that might be helpful to any of you who may be in doubt as to the proper course to pursue, and to assist you to see your way more clearly to abide by the decision of your Church and join in an effort to promote unity of action in this vital matter.

You may have been conscientiously opposed to Union up to the present time, but you have now reached the point where you must decide whether you will be loyal to the Church and its policy or go with those who would divide and disrupt it.

We beg leave to caution you against accepting the statements so frequently made, that the whole movement has been unconstitutional and irregular or that it was conceived by designing men for ulterior purposes and rushed to completion with unseemly haste and without a perfect understanding of the questions involved. The facts cited in the pre-

ceding paragraphs disprove this completely. The character and standing of the men who now favor the union ought also to be sufficient to convince you of the falsity of these statements.

We further caution you against being influenced by the statement that in forming this Union we are abandoning our Confession of Faith and adopting one radically different. Our General Assembly has decided that this is not true, for in accepting the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, as revised in 1903, it has specifically decided that it is not radically different, but, on the contrary, that it is in substance the same as our own. *The constitution authorizes the General Assembly to decide all questions of doctrine.* [Compiler's italics.] Surely the opinion of the General Assembly representing the Church as a whole is more reliable than that of any individual.

THE TWO CREEDS

But what is of still more importance to us is, that *the Presbyterian General Assembly has declared that its amended creed is substantially the same as our own. The Confession of Faith of a Church is not what some people think the Church believes, but what the Church, in an official manner, says that it believes. A Church has the right to choose*

its own words in declaring its belief. Moreover, it has the right to declare the sense in which it uses the words. No one has the right to put into its mouth words which it does not use or to ascribe to its words a meaning different from the sense in which the Church uses them. This position is well sustained by Judge Johns in his decision herein referred to. [Compiler's italics.]

The Presbyterian General Assembly has adopted what it calls a "Brief Statement" of its doctrine, in which it sets forth, in plain, unmistakable language, the meaning of its Confession of Faith, with the various changes which have been made in it. *This interpretation of its creed is authoritative, and the whole world is bound to accept it as the true expression of the belief of the Church.* [Compiler's italics.] It is of more practical value to Cumberland Presbyterians than the Confession of Faith itself, because it tells us what the Confession of Faith means, and that is what most concerns us. Few Cumberland Presbyterians, if any, find fault with any doctrine contained in this Brief Statement. In addition to the adoption of this Brief Statement, the Presbyterian General Assembly, by adopting the Joint Report, has also, in substance, declared that its revised creed agrees with our own. In other words, it has declared that our Confession of Faith correctly ex-

presses the meaning of its own Confession of Faith which we have adopted.

We desire also to caution you against the suggestions that there will be any discrimination in the reunited Church against the country churches or the ministers lacking the advantages of a college education; or that there is any danger of the formation of churches and Presbyteries composed of both the races in the South; or of the assumption of property rights against the wishes of the churches and of the different courts owning the same. All of these suggestions are utterly out of harmony with the spirit and present policy of both Churches, and have been specifically met in the articles of agreement upon which the Union is based. You should not forget that the government of the Reunited Church is practically the same as that of our own, and that all the churches retain, under the new arrangement, the same rights and privileges which they have always enjoyed. These are the common heritage of all Presbyterians, and the changes under the new order of things will be so slight in most cases that they will not be observable by most of you. The fear that the present order of things will be broken up in our congregations, is the result of a lack of knowledge of the facts and we appeal to you to dismiss it at once. These matters remain entirely in your own

hands as heretofore. You will still own your own churches, elect your own officers and your own pastor, and manage your own local affairs as in the past. You will remain independent congregations or unite with others, as you please.

SOLEMN VOWS

We also desire to caution you against too great haste in ignoring the solemn vows you took in uniting with the Church or accepting sacred trusts in it as officers or ministers. You are reminded that the obligations then assumed are not to be lightly cast aside. The ruling elders in their ordination vows, solemnly promised to submit themselves to the Courts of the Church and to study the peace of the Church. See the Constitution, Section 46, sub-sections V and VI. All of our ministers made substantially the same solemn promise. See Constitution, Section 57, subsections IV and VI. All church members, in joining the Church, impliedly agreed to submit to the decisions, and be bound by the action, of the Church Courts. The constitutionality and regularity of the Union having been so fully established, surely you will now desire to take much time for prayer and thought before deciding to repudiate the obligations thus assumed by you.

THE FATHERS FAVORED UNION

From the first, the fathers of the Church have been hoping and praying that the way might open for reunion with the mother Church, as evidenced by their repeated expressions and by the appointment from time to time of committees to confer with similar committees from the Presbyterian Church with reference to the matter. The present Committee on Fraternity and Union has striven earnestly and faithfully to formulate a plan for the consummation of the Union which would be acceptable and honorable alike to all concerned, in both Churches, and we have ever indulged the hope that its wisdom would at last be so evident to all our people that almost without exception they would count it a high privilege to lead the way to closer and more effective organization of the Presbyterian Churches for the extension of the Master's Kingdom. It has therefore been a matter of much grief to us that this has not been so fully accomplished as we have desired. We believe, however, that after calm and dispassionate consideration and the full understanding of the plan, comparatively few of you will fail to see its wisdom.

As you will see by reference to the published details of the agreement, no immediate changes are contemplated, and that almost a year will elapse before the Presbyteries are

called upon to recognize the new relation to the Reunited Church. Adjustments of the various general institutions of the Churches will be made slowly and with a view to the protection of all the interests involved, and this fact will preclude the necessity of hasty action and will give you ample time to determine the course you will finally pursue.

In view of the great interests at stake and of the danger of pursuing a course that will greatly hinder the work of the Church, we confidently appeal to you to be frequent and loving in counsel one with another, to the end that the prayer of the Master may be answered, that all his followers may be one in faith and spirit. Let us be patient and forbearing, ever ready to sink self and self-interest in the desire to follow the leadings of God's spirit.

LET ALL DISSENSION CEASE

Whether or not we are at last able to see eye to eye and to go into the Union without division, let us ever continue to be brothers in Christ, vying with one another in devotion to the cause for which our Master so freely gave His life. Let all dissension cease, each conceding to the other the fullest liberty in this as in all other matters of faith and practice.

The Sessions of the Church are urged to discountenance any premature action of their congregations where there is danger of producing discord and division, and to labor with the brethren for the preservation of that peace and unity which will be pleasing alike to God and men. Whatever adjustments are made, all should be in strict accord with the Constitution of our Church and with due regard to the rights of all the brethren. Enlighten one another on all doubtful points of doctrine and practice, always having due respect for the opinions and prejudices of those who are unable to see as we see. The deacons and trustees and other officers of each church should co-operate in brotherly love to the attainment of these ends. Let all consult the Minutes of the last two General Assemblies, as well as our Constitution, for guidance in all matters of policy and discipline.

DOCTRINAL JUSTIFICATION

This Union gives the distinctive doctrinal position of our Church complete justification, by the mother Church, and we confidently believe that all our higher interests will be promoted and enlarged thereby. We believe that it will result in the strengthening of multitudes of congregations in both communions, and in forwarding the work of world evangelization entrusted to us in the great commis-

sion of the Master in his last words to his disciples. Re-enforced by the well-organized and aggressive forces of the great Presbyterian Church, into whose fellowship we now enter, the glorious Gospel so freely attested on Calvary will be carried to many people who would otherwise never hear its message of hope and peace.

As further expressive of the views of this body, we hereunto append certain resolutions adopted at this meeting of your Assembly, and which are as follows:

Resolved, 1. That in the Reunion and Union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, on the doctrinal basis of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, as revised in 1903, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not surrender anything integral in its own system of doctrine as set out in its own Confession of Faith, nor modify in any particular its adherence to the word of God as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; nor has the Presbyterian Church asked or expected us to do so.

Resolved, 2. That, in uniting with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not alienate the property now held for particular congregations of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; but, that, in the re-

united Church, such property will continue to be held for the use and benefit of particular congregations in like manner as heretofore.

Resolved, 3. That in the adjournment of its General Assembly as a separate Assembly, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not destroy or interrupt its historical continuity, but will continue its life, its history, and its work, in the reunited Church, under the name of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

May 24, 1906.